

**URGENT
ACTION
FUND +**

FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

URGENT ACTION FUND – AFRICA'S RAPID RESPONSE GRANTMAKING

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**17th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on
Gender Mainstreaming in the AU**

About UAF-Africa and Rapid Response Grantmaking

- Urgent Action Fund is a feminist, women's fund:
 - 3 independent funds
 - UAF-Africa established in Nairobi 2001
- Feminist – not enough to deal with the symptoms; deal with structures and systems that generate inequality
- Women's fund – the place of money in moving matters

- Rapid response grantmaking
 - Decline in funding support for work specifically focused on women’s human rights
 - Research showed that women missed out on several opportunities because of rigid funding cycles, patterns.
 - One of the needs was for funds that allowed responses to changing situations, arising opportunities, emerging crises
- **Rapid response grantmaking is a tool that allows us to move money quickly to women human rights actors working in situations that require urgent responses to seize opportunities, or to prevent rollbacks of rights already secured.**

Why rapid response approach

- Rapid response grantmaking
 - Enabling women to be present and be counted, be heard, be visible in spaces where decisions are made.
 - Sometimes women's rights are overlooked simply because women with pro-women agendas are not present. Women very often have to work harder to be present in spaces and when these opportunities open up, they have to be seized quickly or lost.
 - Context in Africa – a quickly morphing, transitioning continent; caught between democratic governance and difficult unrepresentative governments. Responding as issues arise

- Recognition that money is important, but is not the whole story. Money enables the action, sometimes need quick, small amount of money to get started
- Social justice is not predicable. Nothing is static so the path to realising change is not linear or rigid. Enabling women to change strategy as and when they need to, to achieve the change they pursue.

Rapid Response Grants

- Liberia – quick collective response to TRC Report at tense moment; mobilising women to respond and put out a common position
- Egypt – file appeal against sentence of 40 lashes for woman found guilty in court of inappropriate dressing
- Somaliland – women challenging status quo and filing an appeal against lenient sentence for child rapist
- Cote d'Ivoire – responding to impending crisis after election stalemate
- DRC – urgent relocation of two prominent women human rights defenders who had supported documentation of abuses and their families were attacked, daughters raped and death threats issued

- Tanzania – women coming together to demand that political hopefuls address access to water in a rural area because walking distance to water points resulted in several incidents of rape and sexual assaults against women and girls
- Namibia – suing the government for compulsory sterilization of women living with HIV as part of treatment and medical support
- Sierra Leone – production of copies of Gender, Policy and Training Manual for security forces. Unexpected acceptance of gender inclusion in the security sector training, and demand for material necessitated production, before opportunity is lost.

Innovative about Rapid Response Grantmaking

- Context-relevant funding – Recognise contexts are different, allow women to respond to changing environment in context-relevant ways
- More than moving money to meet predetermined outcomes – moving money WHEN it is needed to WHERE it is needed; compliments ongoing programmes, allows responsiveness
- Breaking the donor/grantee divide – recognition that social change is a partnership; money needs to be flexible and

- Moving away from strict dichotomy of rights – realise many women grapple with social, economic rights which affect their civil, political rights.
- Works alongside long-term funding and enables innovation along the way. New ways to pursue the results we seek for women's human rights and for Africa